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# The Divinity School News

THE DIVINITY SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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## ON POWER AND GOODNESS

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot hear:

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. . . .

None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. . . .

The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. . . .

We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

We roar like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them.

### I

WHAT is the Christian gospel for a time like this? The gospel for our time is the same as it has been for all times. It is at once the good news of damnation and the gospel of grace and redemption.

We are living under judgment in these days. We can sense it. We need no preacher to declare it or rub it in. We know it when we read the headlines or in between the lines, whether we read of defeat or of temporary advance, whether we listen to the President's speech calling for more taxes and a tight belt or to the voice of Paul Douglas urging us to an all-out stand for survival. Our munitions mount, our young men return to uniform, or put it on for the first time with callow pride; and Eisenhower goes to Europe again.

These things show our determination—to do what? To survive: to gather the things about us that we have cherished; to hold fast to what we have known; to live on in peace which only prepares for war.

We live under judgment for the years that have brought us to this impasse.

Otto Piper, writing on "Germany's New Outlook" in a recent issue of *Christianity and Crisis*, said:

> Great numbers of Germans are shamefully aware of the amount of brutality, crime and vice that lay hidden behind the impressive facade of National Socialism. They felt unable to assume moral responsibility for those misdeeds, because as they rightly insisted, the average German in the Nazi days knew less of the sordid deeds of his leaders than the average American knows about the background of the recent uprising in Puerto Rico, or the methods of the political "reconstructions" the South Koreans are employing under the eyes of the United Nations Special Committee. But thinking Germans were led through the revelations of the Allied propaganda to a searching of their hearts. What was there in the German people, they asked themselves, that made it possible for the Nazis to get so many members of a formerly decent nation to perpetuate such horrible crimes, obviously with no pangs of conscience? The answer was suggested by the events that followed the collapse, above all by the callous and cruel expulsion of millions of Germans from their age-old homes in eastern and southeast Europe, and by a study of the Allied, especially the American concept of warfare.
>
> The conclusion reached by many Germans is this: The basic evil of the present day is the dehumanization of life. . . . The evil is not confined to a single country either, though it will manifest itself in various ways according to national character and history.

The judgment under which we live is upon all people of our time. For what modern man has done to man? Yes, but for what modern man has left undone as well.

The dehumanization of life implies positive acts of brutality; but it points even more basically to sins of omission.

Our speaker last week remarked, in concluding his sermon, that "we have become patrons of power." This seems commonplace enough out of context. What more obvious remark could one make? Yet, you see it is true; and it is perilous, so, obvious or not, it must be commented upon.

Now commitment to power, in itself, seems innocent enough. Pragmatically speaking, this is simply dedication to knowledge which can be put to work; for such knowledge is power. Commitment to power begins in a conscientious redefinition of knowledge and of educational ends. Knowledge so defined looks to the sciences for method and procedure. It becomes simply the way a modern university does its business and the way university people win their status as men who know and as men who can do.

But it extends to an ever greater empowerment of industry and to the means which will keep industry rising and rising; and to the support of laboratories and new structures to house them; and to the discovery of new energy and to new enterprises to which to apply it; and to an ever rising standard of living and to an ever greater dependence upon a rising standard of living. And the spiral is unending, when left to the logic of this technical pursuit.

What emerges as an innocent theory of instrumental knowledge can pyra-

mid in power, creating a cultural élan that can aspire to nothing less than leviathan.

This preoccupation with power tools and with power plants and with an unremitting search after new and greater resources of power—the open road to discovery, as we phrase it in dignified academic circles—can crowd out every other concern in society. For the search is absorbing, and the support of such enterprises is demanding beyond any reasonable budget.

We need not look far to witness the truth of this predicament. It has occurred upon our own campus. We are a people who has the vision of wisdom and goodness before our eyes—of education for the goods of the human spirit; but atomic research and its ever expanding subsidiaries have enveloped the quadrangles and absorbed the energies of administration.

The humanistic studies live and breathe, but to what purpose? Certainly they are not the commanding beacon, witnessing to the higher learning.

This imbalance of wisdom and the patronage of power has long corrupted our cultural life. That it has come to dominate this campus where a determined effort was being made to advance the arts of the mind, directed by educational leadership which was unique in courage and fortitude, leaves one sobered, if not despairing.

What we have left undone in this culture of the mind, bent on power, is the culture of the spirit in man that can open man's mind and heart to the redemptive good.

Now, mind you, this is no simple choice between power and goodness. The Christian gospel is not the denial of power in the name of goodness. It is the interrelation of power and goodness: a goodness evincing the power to raise man from the dead, as the narrative runs, but a power limited by goodness; power directed toward goodness.

We may not say that knowledge simply because it issues in power is thereby accounted evil; but knowledge of this effective sort, released for unlimited venturing, unperturbed by the perils implicit in its ambiguous activities, is clearly an agent of evil.

When knowledge is power, it will tend to become evil unless it is qualified by a concern for goodness.

We may not assume that scientific research or the concern with science implies an overt ruthlessness. Within the laboratory these are highly sensitive, patient, even gentle activities. But as resources of instrumental knowledge unqualified by a concern for wisdom and goodness they are readily made agents of evil, corrupting the cultural life at its sources.

II

Curiously enough, we in the churches, or we who work through the churches, present the inverse condition. With all our concern for goodness we have lacked the capacity to *generate* power or to *avail* ourselves of power which awaits us as redemptive energy in acts of grace, of forgiveness, or of dedication. Thus, in the very age which most needs its restraining gospel, the churches have rendered their witness impotent.

For a sobering degree, this concern with goodness is simply passion without regard for process. At most, its fruition can be only sentiment without structure.

Now, to be caught up in the feeling of passion can give one the illusion of power. And there is a sense in which we, who work through the churches, have subtly deceived ourselves and others by presuming to bear witness to the redemptive goodness in Christ when, as a matter of fact, we have simply been emulating this patronage of power—assuming a role which had *the feel of power* but neglecting the patient, sensitive, unheralded acts of nurture through which the redemptive work of God can be mediated.

In these ambiguous efforts, preaching goodness but capitulating to the patronage of power, we have become instruments of judgment, but not of grace. This is our failure! And the failure within Protestantism is very great.

The Christian gospel implies the interworking of judgment and grace—of power in its assertive and dynamic sense, and this more gentle might. Hence, the juxtaposition of prophetic criticism and the appeal to nurture in the public utterances of Jesus.

Jesus was moved to cry out under the necessity of denouncing intolerable smugness and self-righteousness: "Woe unto you scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites!" but he could also speak in the imagery of the parable.

We can have faith that will move mountains, he declared; yet faith, he said on other occasions, is like a seed planted in the earth—a grain of mustard seed which, when it has burst through the ground, becomes a tree so large that birds can come and lodge in its branches.

This interplay of gentleness and power in the Christian gospel is so striking that one wonders how it can be overlooked. Yet it has been repeatedly overlooked. And it is being overlooked today.

The quickening of prophetic passion together with nurture harnesses the energies of judgment and grace. It is like the breaking through of old, resistant structures in the process of generating new life. This is a principle of cre-

ativity in which the redemptive act follows upon the act of judgment, issuing then in a new creation.

But this interplay of judgment and grace is a method of life in any institution, or in any community, in fact in any situation, when the principle of creativity, releasing the redemptive good, is at work.

But note how we dissipate this prophetic force and thus stop short of availing ourselves of the work of grace. Consider, for example, the religious work on the college or university campus, as it is commonly conceived.

The method of religious work on the campus, like the method of many churches generally, tends to operate within two keys: either that of lethargy or that of impassioned zeal. The campus, like the community, can persist at an appalling level of mediocre program-building, and then, with the inspiration of a visit by the Holy Spirit, it will break out with a religious emphasis week or with evangelical meetings. "What we need on this campus," said a spirited college student, "is someone who will tell them what's what!"

This is generally the way out when the tide runs low. Religion when it has not been a peripheral affair on the campus has been at best an occasional upsurge of spirited protest, in the form either of intermittent social reaction or of a concerted attack upon academic complacency through week-end conferences or preaching missions.

The churches can play their politics that way, too. They are complacent or they are reformist. And they alternate between these two roles. The veterans of the Parkhurst Crusade never tire of relating the thrilling days of political reform in New York when, in their finest hour of indignation, they picked Tammany Hall up by its rafters and threw it into the East River. Reformists love to throw people into the river. Ever since the atomic bomb was released, irritant religionists have been itchy all over trying to phrase a *good news of damnation* which might measure up to the ominous tone of the age.

Somehow we seem to assume that witnessing to the faith means simply posting the ninety-five theses!

I have puzzled over this impassioned impotence which we manifest in our efforts to relate religion to culture, and I have come to a few conclusions:

1. Part of our ineptness arises, I feel sure, from our inadequate grasp of the importance of process. The truth of the parables has not reached us. We have heard only the denunciations of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

2. Our inability to grasp the importance of process is, in part, a theologi-

cal deficiency. The theological deficiency arises from the persistent neglect of the doctrine of creation; or, rather, the failure to see that the concern with the redemptive activity of God logically leads to a concern with creativity. This the ancient Hebrews knew, as did the New Testament writers after them, in so far as they lifted up the creative theme of nurture along with the message of judgment.

3. The neglect of the creative motif in religious thinking and in religious work has led to a deficient sense of the importance of structures, and for the subtle and silent work in nature and in history which provides the conditions for structural growth, or for their decay and dissolution. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save . . . but your iniquities have separated between you and your God."

Now, let me be more reassuring. The goodness of God, like the energies of earth yet unreleased, at which we work so zealously, awaits the perceptive and receptive spirit of man. Only man is commanded to wrest from him the redemptive love that is in his hand to give. It is a gift more free than the abundance of the earth. It is a love seeking man out in his misery, his degradation, his despair and defeat. To be able to receive this good that is not our own is the concern that is laid upon every man and upon every community.

The barriers which rise from the impassioned and determined efforts of our age, blocking the energies of faith, are immense, resistant, almost impregnable. Yet there is redemption for the age, if there be fifty, if there be forty, or thirty, or twenty, or ten in Sodom who can receive this good into the structures and processes of this sickened and disordered life.

We are called to bear witness to this redemptive good which moves in our midst as the working of the living God.

In the face of the tyranny that terrifies the little peoples of the world into submission, of the vanity which transmutes our freedom into an aimless search for abundance; and in the midst of our ever increasing threat to survival, we will be tempted to make swift work of our mission by ransoming our culture through denunciation.

Know that the grace of God works through the structures which are available and receptive to his goodness. The acts of nurture, however small, in whatever situation they may occur, will be, through God's help, redemptive acts for this distraught and despairing age.

BERNARD E. MELAND

BOND CHAPEL
January 23, 1951

# THE TEMPO OF FAITH

WE ARE living in the midst of great movements of power: political, economic, and military. Events of world importance happen so quickly and in such an interrelated manner that we are not able to grasp their meaning. Industrial and technological forces shape our culture in almost irresistible fashion. We are moved by powers practically beyond our control and perhaps even beyond our clear understanding. The Marxist thesis that the modes of production are the basic determinants of the cultural life of a society is true to at least a sobering degree. Our sciences and their resultant technologies give rise to temptations and promises that attract even our ablest youths in increasing numbers. Our educational institutions and instruments are inadequate. Personal and social standards are corrupted. We live and have our being in a world wherein we become more and more dehumanized.

What is the relevance of Christian faith in a time such as this? How do we justify our existence as students and as faculty? We are strongly tempted to think that if Christian faith has any relevance, we ought to be able to state it in terms of large, clear, and arresting propositions so that all peoples will see and become convinced and act accordingly. We are being shaped and threatened by fast-moving forces. If the Christian faith is relevant to our age, we are prone to feel that its relevance must be such that we can compete with these swift movements on their own terms. A great and tremendous transformation of far-reaching significance is necessary. Surely a high religion must be capable of generating the conditions whereby this regeneration will occur. A great awakening is needed. Obviously, quick and lasting results are called for. Our techniques must keep pace with the modern tempo.

I suggest that this attitude, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, is present in all of us at one time or another. I suggest also that this attitude, or its substitute, vitiates our intellectual efforts, gnaws at our inward parts, and divides our vocational singleness of purpose.

Part of the Christian gospel is that there is a God; this God is active in history; man is ultimately dependent on him; yet God moves in his own way and in his own time. Part of our difficulty is that God's activity does not seem to keep up with the events of the world. He appears to move too slowly to meet our needs. God is so undramatic, so unspectacular, so unhurried. And we really do not expect a sudden apocalyptic coming of the kingdom of God.

Perhaps one of the hardest lessons for us to learn is that we reap only what we sow. God is not mocked. We prize what we have to struggle for. We value what we achieve by discipline.

The tempo of God's patience is akin to the living experience of the teacher participating in the growth of the student to integrity, wholeness, and self-consciousness; from limited and binding horizons to a wider, deeper, and more enriched world; from vague idealistic yearnings for justice to a fuller under-

standing of Christian faith; from a divided and rebellious self with emotional blocks to a freer and more creative person; from vocational uncertainty to a steadier vision and commitment; from inability to think critically and constructively to a greater capacity for independent thought and analysis; from religious illiteracy and uncritical cultural devotion to a more self-conscious and discerning sensitivity to who and what one is; from unawakened capacities to released powers of appreciation; from social and collegiate togetherness to the joyous oneness and solidarity of Christian worship.

Again, the tempo of the development of Christian faith is exemplified in the prophet. The true prophet is one who sees our cultural gods for the idols they are. We cannot know the true God unless we can distinguish him from our graven images. But we cannot see our idols for what they are unless in some sense we know the true God. Each step comes first. This ability to discriminate between the living God and our manageable idols is a precious capacity which is necessary for our survival, for the reason that manageable or finite idol will fail us in time of crisis.

Now what the prophet sees is there for all of us to see. But what is there to be seen is deeply there, deeply imbedded, closer to us than breathing, literally closer than hands or feet. The great truths are obvious—when they have been pointed out. The profound truths are ultimately simple, elemental, and basic. But the observing of profoundly simple truths is not a quickly acquired skill. It requires a penetrating perceptiveness that is the product of disciplined sensitivity and the brooding imagination of solitariness. And the articulation of profound insights in terms of classic and unforgettable simplicity is possible only for those who have paid the price of long familiarity.

The prophet maintains a sense of great and vast alternatives in terms of which the arbitrariness of our present cultural values can be seen. They are the vigilant keepers of our dreams. Prophets are born of a community, but with courage they transcend it with their criticism. They shirk from their appointed task, for who wants to set his face against his fellows?

Still again, Christian faith holds that God is sovereign over all of culture. Yet the impossibility of theology's re-establishing itself as the queen of the sciences in the foreseeable future is seen when we consider the plight of the theologian in our colleges and universities. For hundreds of years theology has not been the intellectual discipline which has attracted most of our greatest minds. The intellectual exposition and defense of the Christian faith has suffered too many setbacks to be regarded by most as an acceptable catalytic agent in the attempted synthesis of our several intellectual disciplines. Not only is the Christian faith seriously divided in its many competing interpretations of itself, but it must undertake fundamental spadework in order to keep up with the major intellectual discoveries of our age. We must again, and in the profound sense, come to believe in the intrinsic worth of the life and works of the mind. The answer of Christian faith to the skepticism of our age

must be at least intellectually vigorous and fertile. But the reply to skepticism cannot be made quickly, easily, or in terms of platitudes.

Our intellectual task is complicated by the fact that we deal not only with man's mind but with his spirit. Ours is a battle for the whole of man, for the inward parts, for the intangibles and imponderables of creative freedom and its misuse. We can expect no clear-cut victory such as may occur in a military campaign, for we wage war against a recurring and omnipresent foe—ourselves and others as sinners. Our enemies are not primarily things but powers and principalities.

Christian faith is not just an idea. It issues into ideas of great consequence, but it roots in a life lived, events that happened, a power illustrated and incarnate, experiences shared and transmitted. Christian faith is a community, historic and contemporaneous. It is a fellowship, a people, a church in relation to its creator and sustainer. The answer of the church to our many problems does not consist in identifying itself completely with any or all great causes, although it should support them. Its answer will come in responding as a living organism, locally and world-wide, to the dependable grace of Him upon whom we entrust ourselves in joyous gratitude. The answer of the church will come in so far as it attempts to be itself, not in isolation but as chief confessor. For ours is the unearned victory—the victory of the unworthy servant.

BERNARD M. LOOMER

BOND CHAPEL
October 3, 1950

## NOTES FROM THE DEAN'S OFFICE

### REGISTRATION

The registration in the Federated Theological Schools for the Spring Quarter is 319. Of this total number, 150 were registered in the Divinity School, 123 in the Chicago Theological Seminary, 24 in Disciples Divinity House, and 22 in Meadville Theological School.

### CONVOCATION

At the Winter Convocation, March 16, 1951, the following degrees were conferred:

*Doctor of Philosophy*

HEINZ KARL LADWIG
*Thesis:* The Old Testament Idea of God as Judge

CARLETON LAFAYETTE LEE
*Thesis:* Patterns of Leadership in Race Relations

PERRY DEYO LEFEVRE
*Thesis:* The Nature of Personal Existence

*Bachelor of Divinity*

ROBERT EDWARD CLEVELAND
*Thesis:* Berdyaev: A Study

## ALUMNI NEWS

### BIRTHS

The *News* extends congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Leland Jamison, Ph.D. '41, on the birth of a son, Christopher Wayland, on March 20, 1951.

We also wish to extend congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Willis E. Elliott, ex-'43, on the birth of a son, Peter Mark, on April 3, 1951.

### PERSONALS

The Reverend Vernon H. MacNeill, ex-'30, for fourteen years the minister of the First Baptist Church of Rock Island, Illinois, is now executive secretary of the Illinois Church Council.

Albion C. Bro, ex-'26, a former president of Frances Shimer College and more recently cultural attaché to the American Legation in Seoul, now occupies a similar position in the American Legation at Djarta, the capital of the new republic of Indonesia. Mrs. Bro and their son, Andrew, joined him there on Christmas Day last year.

Theophile J. Meek, Ph.D. '15, professor of oriental languages in the University of Toronto, has just published a revised and enlarged edition of his important study of *Hebrew Origins*. The original chapters of this volume were delivered as Haskell Lectures at Oberlin Graduate School of Theology in 1933–34.

S. V. McCasland, Ph.D. '26, is the author of an exceedingly important study of demon possession and exorcism in early Christianity in a volume entitled *By the Finger of God*. Dr. McCasland is Cary Professor of Religion in the University of Virginia.

Mary Ely Luman, Ph.D. '24, has been inducted as Jessup Professor of English Bible at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

In a letter from Willis E. Elliott, ex-'43, he says: "While I hope to finish that thesis soon my 100-week in the church really cuts into my study time! Without professional help, we have raised $52,000 and are building, tripling the size of our plant.... The grass-roots ecumene idea (accepting both Catholics and Protestants into 'one fold') is taking hold."

Charles T. Holman, B.D. '15, and Mrs. Holman recently celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary. Dean Holman is now pastor of the Union Church of Guatemala City. On February 25 he dedicated the new church building of the Union Church which is an inspiring masterpiece of religious architecture.

E. C. Colwell, Ph.D. '30, gave the dedication address for the new campus of the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.

The Westminster Press in Philadelphia has recently published a translation of *Der Sinn der Bergpredigt* by Hans Windisch. The translator is S. MacLean Gilmour, Ph.D. '37, now professor of New Testament in Queen's Theological College, Kingston, Ontario.

William S. Hockman, M.A. '24, is completing twenty-three years as director of religious education in Lakewood Presbyterian Church. On March 4, 1951, Mr. Hockman dedicated the new educational building and the remodeled church.

E. Theodore Bachman, Ph.D. '46, re-

turned to the United States after two and one half years in Germany as deputy chief, Religious Affairs Branch, U.S. Military Government (until 1949), and U.S. High Commissioner (until 1951). He is currently teaching American and modern European history within the framework of ecumenical movement.

F. W. Gingrich, Ph.D. '32, discussed "A New Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament" at the New Testament Club meeting in the University of Chicago on April 9. The new Greek-English Lexicon is one of two major critical New Testament projects that is currently being carried forward here at the University. Dr. Gingrich has leave of absence from Albright College to enable him to devote full time to carrying forward this project.

Alexander Winston, B.D. '35, is publishing his second book, *I Leave You My Heart,* in October, 1951. Dr. Winston received his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Washington in 1949 and has been lecturer in philosophy at Tufts College since 1944. He is at present pastor of the historic First Parish in Portland, Maine. In 1949 he published *You Are the Key,* and he is also co-author of a popular booklet for the sick, *The Lord Is My Strength,* which has sold twenty thousand copies.

Antranig A. Bedikian, B.D. '15, has written a book called *Sketches of the Village Bardizag.* This literary work, in Armenian, was published in Paris, France.

Charles J. Curtis, M.A. '47, is now serving as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church of San Lorenzo, California.

Edward W. Willcox, M.A. '24, who has just completed a fifteen-year pastorate at First Congregational Church, Kent, Ohio, is now superintendent of the Congregational Association of Detroit.

## ATTENTION ALUMNI!

*Help us to make our alumni records more complete. The Alumni Association urges every alumnus to send information about himself or other alumni. Please fill in this blank and return it to the Office of Extension, Divinity School, University of Chicago.*

Name_____ Address_____

U. of C. degrees_____ Year_____

Other Degrees_____ Institutions_____ Year_____

Mailing address_____

New pastorate or other position_____

Book published_____

Election to position of honor or responsibility_____

Interesting project recently accomplished_____

Any other information of interest_____

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